





# Maximizing the Role of Peer Support Specialists in the Emergency Department

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## Objectives

- Understanding What are Peer Support Specialists?
- Brief History on the Peer Support Movement
- Benefits of Utilizing Peer Support in the Emergency Department
- Key Roles and Responsibilities of Peer Support Specialists
- Integration into the Emergency Department Setting



# The Early Peer Support Movement

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## History until Now

- Originated in 18th century France from survivors in psychiatric institutions began writing pamphlets and established advocacy groups to bring their stories and experiences to the public.
- 1970's popularized in America due to state institutions closing and releasing patients.
- The Mental Health Consumer Movement provided reform mental health services aligned the Peer Support Movement to offer alternative healthcare.
- In 2003, The President's New Freedom Commission Report (2003) outlined a plan to transform mental health care in America to promote a recovery-oriented service system. Peer support was an important element in this transformation process.
- Types of Peer Support Certifications in Kentucky:
  - Adult Peer Support Specialist
  - Drug and Alcohol Peer Support Specialist
  - Youth Peer Support Specialist
  - Family Peer Support Specialist



# Introduction to Peer Support Specialists

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## Introduction to Peer Support Specialists (PSS)

- An individual who has lived experience with a mental health condition, substance use disorder, or another challenging life situation and has received specialized training to provide support to others facing similar challenges.
- They work in various settings, including mental health facilities, substance abuse treatment centers, hospitals, community organizations, and other healthcare settings.

## Importance of Peer Support in Healthcare Settings

- These individuals offer emotional support, practical assistance, and advocacy based on their own experiences of recovery and resilience.
- Their unique perspective and empathy enable them to connect with individuals in need, offering hope, encouragement, and empowerment on their journey to wellness.



# What are Peer Support Specialists?

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## Characteristics and Qualifications

- Must be in recovery from a substance use and/or mental health disorder.
- A high school diploma or a General Education Diploma (GED) is required.
- Completes 30 hours of training and passes both a written and oral test.
- Successfully complete, maintain, and submit to the department documentation of a minimum of six (6) hours of related training or education in each subsequent year.

## Additional Requirements as of March 2024

- Have completed five hundred (500) hours of board-approved experience working with persons having a substance use disorder, twenty-five (25) hours of which shall have been under the direct supervision of registered clinical supervisor approved by the board.
- 40 hours board approved classroom hours.
- Attest to being in recovery for twelve (12) consecutive months from a substance use disorder.
- Fifty-one (51) CEU hours in specific categories



# Benefits of Utilizing Peer Support in the Emergency Department

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## Enhance Patient Care

- Active listening
- Showing Empathy and Compassion
- Shared Decision-Making
- Showing Respect for Patient Preferences
- Patient Education

## Reduce Stigma and Improve Engagement

- Provide Education and Awareness
- Language and Communication
- Promote Empathy and Understanding
- Address Structural Barriers

## Empowerment and Recovery-Oriented Approach

- Strengths-based approach
- Collaborative Partnership
- Holistic Care
- Goal Setting and Action Planning
- Education and Information



# Language is Important

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## Negative Language

1. "Drug Addict" "junkie"
2. "Abuser or Drug Abuser"
3. "Clean or Dirty"
4. "Dirty Urine"
5. "Addiction Epidemic"
6. "Recovering Addict" or "Recovering Alcoholic"

## Person-Centered

1. "Person who uses drugs" or "Individual with Substance use disorder"
2. "Person who misuses drugs"
3. "In recovery" or "Return to use" "experiencing a setback"
4. "Positive Drug Screen"
5. "Substance Use Disorder Crisis"
6. "Person in Recovery"



# Integration into the Emergency Department Setting

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## How Can They be Successful?

- Assessment of Need
- Tag in a Peer Support Specialist
- Collaboration with ED Staff
- Development of Protocols and Procedures
- Integration into Care Processes
- Peer Support Space
- Community Partnerships
- Promotion and Awareness





# Key Roles and Responsibilities of Peer Support Specialists

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## What do they do?

- Provide Emotional Support and Empathy to Patients
- Offer Practical Assistance and Resources
- Advocate for Patient Needs
- Collaborate with Healthcare Providers for Holistic Care



# Key Roles and Responsibilities of Peer Support Specialists

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## How Do They Do It?

- Use relevant personal stories to teach through experience
- Serve as a role model for clients and their families
- Encourage client and family voice and choice during development and implementation of plans
- Support clients and their families by attending team meetings with them upon request
- Empower a client and family to have the confidence to be self-advocates
- Help providers or other individuals who are working with a client's family understand the importance of integrating family and youth voice and choice in services and supports within a system of care
- Help clients and families enhance relationships with community partners



# How Have We Been Doing This?

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## Case Studies and Success Stories

- Real-life Examples of Peer Support Specialists in Action
- Positive Outcomes and Impact on Patient Care
- Lessons Learned and Best Practices

## Measures of Success

- Patient Satisfaction Surveys
- Reduction in Repeat Emergency Department Visits
- Qualitative Feedback from Patients and Healthcare Providers
- Improved Mental Health and Well-being of Patients and Staff



**Questions?**

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